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58TH CONGRESS, 3d Session. } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. { DOCUMENT No. 340.

SEARCHING FOR REMAINS OF ADMIRAL JOHN PAUL JONES, ETC.

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MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

RECOMMENDING

AN APPROPRIATION BY CONGRESS TO BE EXPENDED IN SEARCHING FOR THE REMAINS OF ADMIRAL JOHN PAUL JONES IN PARIS, FRANCE, AND TRANSMITTING THE REPORT OF AMBASSADOR PORTER ON THE SUBJECT, AND ALSO URGING THAT PROVISION BE MADE FOR THE ERECTION OF MONUMENTS TO THE MEMORIES OF JOHN PAUL JONES AND JOHN BARRY.

FEBRUARY 15, 1905.—Referred to the Committee on the Library and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

For a number of years efforts have been made to confirm the historical statement that the remains of Admiral John Paul Jones were interred in a certain piece of ground in the city of Paris then owned by the Government and used at the time as a burial place for foreign Protestants. These efforts have at last resulted in documentary proof that John Paul Jones was buried on July 20, 1792, between 8 and 9 o'clock, p. m., in the now abandoned cemetery of St. Louis, in the northeastern section of Paris. About 500 bodies were interred there, and the body of the Admiral was probably among the last hundred buried. It was incased in a leaden coffin, calculated to withstand the ravages of time.

The cemetery was about 210 feet long by 120 feet wide. Since its disuse as a burial place the soil has been filled to a level and covered almost completely by buildings, most of them of an inferior class.

The American ambassador in Paris, being satisfied that it is practical to discover and identify the remains of John Paul Jones, has, after prolonged negotiations with the present holders of the property and the tenants thereof, secured from them options in writing which give him the right to dig in all parts of the property during a period of three months for the purpose of making the necessary excavations and

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searches, upon condition of a stated compensation for the damage and annoyance caused by the work. The actual search is to be conducted by the chief engineer of the municipal department of Paris having charge of subterranean works at a cost which has been carefully estimated. The ambassador gives the entire cost of the work, including the options, compensation, cost of excavating, and caring for the remains as not exceeding 180,000 francs, or $35,000, on the supposition that the body may not be found until the whole area has been searched. If earlier discovered the expense would be proportionately less.

The great interest which our people feel in the story of Paul Jones's life, the national sense of gratitude for the great service done by him toward the achievement of independence, and the sentiment of mingled distress and regret felt because the body of one of our greatest heroes lies, forgotten, and unmarked in foreign soil lead me to approve the ambassador's suggestion that Congress should take advantage of this unexpected opportunity to do proper honor to the memory of Paul Jones, and appropriate the sum of $35,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary, for the purposes above described, to be expended under the direction of the Secretary of State.

The report of Ambassador Porter, with the plans and photograph of the property, is annexed hereto.

In addition to the foregoing recommendation I urge that Congress emphasize the value set by our people upon the achievements of the naval commanders in our war of independence by providing for the erection of appropriate monuments to the memory of two, at least, of those who now lie in undistinguished graves, John Paul Jones and John Barry. These two men hold unique positions in the history of the birth of our Navy. Their services were of the highest moment to the young Republic in the days when it remained to be determined whether or not she should win out in her struggle for independence. It is eminently fitting that these services should now be commemorated in suitable manner.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *February 13, 1905.*

No. 1384.] AMERICAN EMBASSY,
Paris, January 24, 1905.

SIR: Referring to my last report, dated October 20, 1903, concerning the search for the grave of John Paul Jones, I have the honor to communicate that since then I have continued uninterruptedly the investigations and negotiations with the property holders and am now able to report the final and satisfactory result of my efforts, which have extended over five years.

The additional evidence which I have succeeded in procuring since that report fully substantiates the following facts:

John Paul Jones was certainly buried on July 20, 1792, between 8 and 9 o'clock p. m., in the now abandoned cemetery of St. Louis, in the northeast section of Paris, property then owned by the Government and used at that time as a burial place for foreign Protestants. The land is about 210 feet long by 129 feet wide.

It has been leveled up by a filling of earth and is now covered completely by buildings, most of them of an inferior class. When overtures were first made by me to the proprietor and tenants, with a view of making extensive excavations for the purpose of searching for the grave of Admiral Jones, their demands were so exorbitant that it seemed that it might be better to purchase the whole property and sell it after the examination of the graves had been made. There were so many objections, however, to such a procedure, and the cost would have been so great and so problematical, that I deemed it necessary to appear to abandon the whole project for a time and let the excitement die out before again attempting to deal with the landowners.

To-day, after long and tedious negotiations occupying more than a year, and in the course of which it was necessary to treat with the proprietors and numerous tenants, I have secured options in writing from them which give me the right to dig in all parts of the property during a period of three months, for the purpose of making the necessary excavations and searches, upon condition that they are to receive, as compensation for the annoyance caused by the work, various sums, of which the total amount is 25,000 francs ($4,850), and an agreement to replace the earth and restore the property to its present condition. The Government department of "Les Carrieres," which has charge of all the underground excavations and searches conducted in Paris, has, at my solicitation, been authorized by the prefect of the Seine to perform the work upon being reimbursed for the expense incurred, and the experienced chief engineer of that department has made an estimate of the cost and places it at 130,000 francs ($25,300) as a maximum; that is, supposing that the body should be found only at the last stroke of the pick.

A contingent sum of 10,000 francs ($1,940) should be provided to cover damages to buildings and individuals that might be accidentally injured; a further amount of 5,000 francs ($970) for the purpose of procuring a suitable casket, renting a receiving vault, and caring for the remains while awaiting transportation, and 10,000 francs ($1,940) for fees of architect superintending the work. This would require a maximum appropriation of 180,000 francs ($35,000) so much of which to be expended as may be necessary to secure the body. There were about 500 bodies buried in this cemetery. Admiral Jones, according to the best calculations I can make, was among the last 100 interred, so that his body in all probability lies near one or the other extremity of the cemetery, according to whether the interments began near the entrance or at the farther end. As the search would begin at the opposite extremities the chances are that the body would be found without having to run the excavations under the entire property, and that the expense would be reduced accordingly. The proofs that I have collected to enable me to form a judgment as to the advisability of undertaking a systematic search in this cemetery are too voluminous to trouble you with them. I will give you the result of my convictions based upon a long and careful study of all the circumstances.

First. There is authentic documentary evidence that John Paul Jones was buried in Paris, and was not buried in any other cemetery, and convincing proof that he was buried in the St. Louis cemetery.

Second. There is positive documentary proof that he was buried in a leaden coffin. An authentic letter written to his eldest sister, Mrs.

Janet Taylor, of Scotland, by Col. Samuel Blackden, his nearest friend and a witness of his will, says:

> His body was put into a leaden coffin on the 20th July, 1792, that in case the United States, which he had so essentially served and with so much honor, should claim his remains they might be more easily removed.

There is nothing in the character of the soil, in the judgment of scientists, that could lead to the belief that the lead has deteriorated and ceased to protect the body.

Third. While the bodies have been removed from some of the abandoned cemeteries within the city limits, there is no record or indication of any removals from this one except the digging up of some human bones in excavating for a boiler pit and for a small drain, and the removal of the body of an Englishwoman to England in 1803 that had been buried in a leaden coffin. There is, therefore, every probability that Admiral Jones's remains lie undisturbed to-day in this abandoned cemetery.

Fourth. As to the identification of his body, the foreign Protestants buried in this cemetery being of a poor class, including many soldiers of the Swiss Guard, whose friends could not afford the considerable expense of leaden coffins, it is highly probable that there are not a dozen such coffins there. It is altogether likely that those providing coffins of this expensive kind would spend a few francs more affixing a plate bearing the name of the deceased, particularly in the case of Admiral Jones, whose body it was supposed would be taken some day to the United States. If the name is not on the coffin, the identification might be verified by its location in the cemetery among the last buried there, by the measurement of the body, Paul Jones being described in Anecdotes of the Court of Louis XVI as "5 feet 7 inches high, slender in build, exquisitely symmetrical in form, with noticeable perfect development of limbs," the chance that some of the bodies in the few other leaden coffins might be those of women or children and could be excluded, or by some token in the casket, as in those days some keepsake was often placed with the remains in the coffin. I have found a complete list of his uniforms, swords, and decorations, which were disposed of after his death, according to the provisions of his will, so that he was not buried in a uniform, and no sword or decoration was placed in the coffin.

It is humiliating to the American pride to know that the father of the American Navy has lain in an obscure and squalid quarter of this city for more than a century; that the ground above his grave has been desecrated by its use for market gardening, the burying of dogs, and used by contractors for emptying cesspools, and that this heroic commander was interred by charity. I find from official records that when his death was solemnly announced in the French General Assembly and when that body appointed a large deputation to attend his funeral and adjourned out of respect to his memory a statement was made by a deputy that there were no funds for providing for his funeral. Then it was that a noble and generous man, M. Pierre Francois Simonneau, a commissary of the King and commissary of police of that quarter of Paris, proposed to pay the expense out of his own pocket, which he did. I recently discovered, where I least expected to find it, the original bill, the amount being 462 francs—about $92.

Now that the extensive preliminary researches have been finished and a very favorable option obtained to enter upon the premises and make the necessary excavations, it seems the proper time to make an effort to secure the remains of this illustrious commander and to inter them with becoming honors in the country upon whose history he shed such luster. I am convinced that if this opportunity be lost there will never again be so fortunate a combination of circumstances favoring the procuring of the body. While the proprietor and tenants will not name in writing a definite period during which the right to begin the work shall continue in force, yet I feel that I can hold them to it till after the present session of Congress to await an appropriation. After that time there will be changes no doubt among the smaller tenants, and the negotiations would have to be undertaken anew with much less chance of success. It will be necessary to act quickly in order to finish the work before the approach of warm weather, as there is objection here to turning up cemetery earth at that season for fear of creating sickness.

Although I had located and verified the place of burial long before this, I could not recommend an appropaiation for securing the body until I could obtain a definite and economical agreement, giving the right to make all the necessary excavations. I now feel justified in recommending an appeal to Congress for an early maximum of appropriation of $35,000 for the purpose herein named, upon condition that proper vouchers, duly receipted, be furnished for such portion of this sum as it may be found necessary to expend. The small expenses incurred in pursuing the searches up to this time are not included in the above estimate, as these have been borne personally. Even if the whole of the collected evidence should prove deceptive and for some unaccountable reason the body after all should not be found, it seems to me that it would be well worth this small expenditure and all the trouble taken to settle once and forever the question of the possibility of discovering this historic grave.

In this connection I wish to express my deep appreciation of the valuable aid rendered in this work by the able second secretary of this embassy, Col. A. Bailly-Blanchard, who has been associated with me from the start in making the elaborate researches required to bring about the present result.

Let me, in conclusion, place on record my sense of gratitude to the French authorities who, from the highest official to the humblest subordinate, have manifested the deepest interest in the subject and have given me all possible facilities and assistance.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

HORACE PORTER.

Hon. JOHN HAY,
Secretary of State, Washington, D. C.

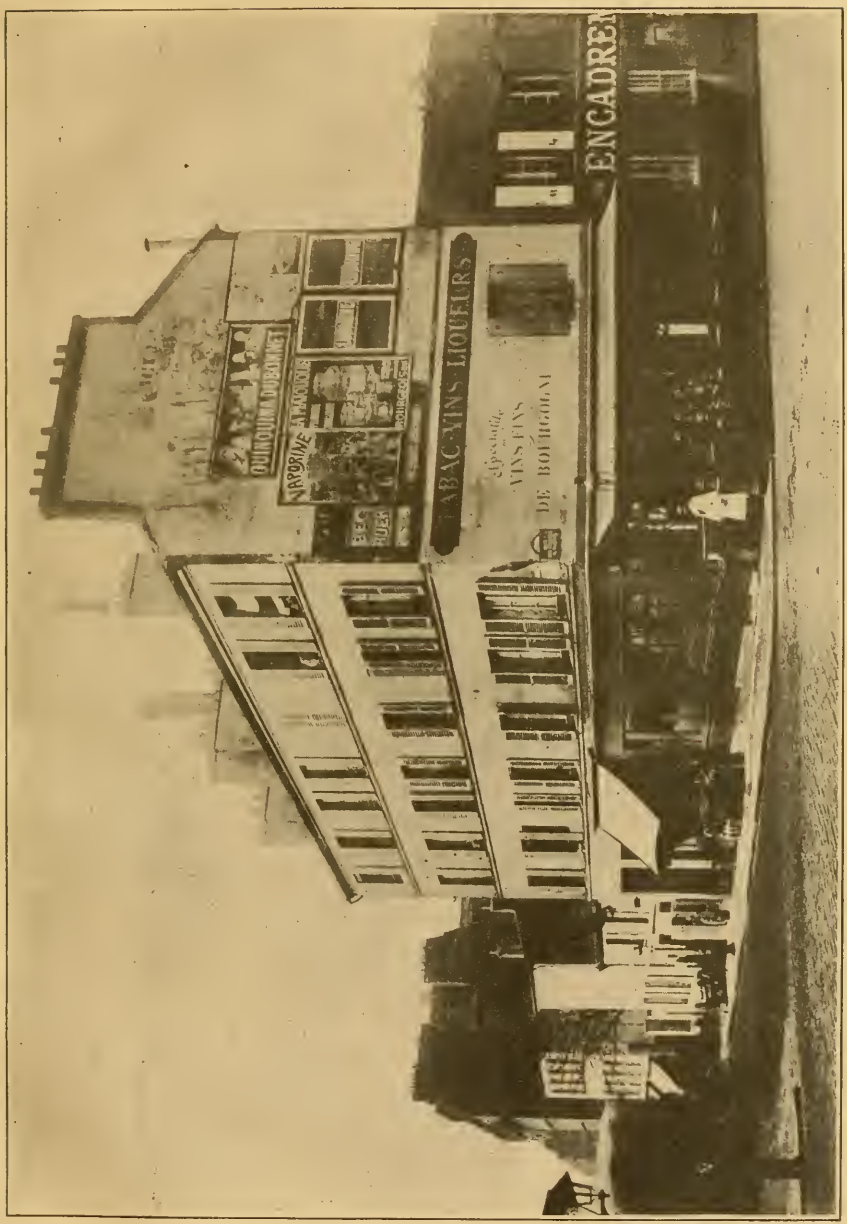
RECAPITULATION.

Amount agreed upon as compensation to the proprietor and tenants for permission to excavate in the cemetery proper (15,000 francs)	$2,910
In the courtyard, if necessary to search there (10,000 francs)	1,940
Maximum cost of the excavations throughout the entire cemetery and courtyard, replacing the earth, and restoring the property (130,000 francs)	25,300

To cover possible damages to buildings and individuals accidentally injured (10,000 francs)	$1,940
Cost of casket, rental of receiving vault, and caring for remains while awaiting transportation (5,000 francs)	970
Fees to architect superintending the work (10,000 francs)	1,940
Maximum appropriation required (180,000 francs)	35,000

INCLOSURES.

1. Photograph of present appearance of property.
2. Plan of the property in 1792.
3. Plan of the property in 1905.



Present appearance of the property beneath which lies the abandoned cemetery of St. Louis—1905.

PLAN
of the
St. Louis Cemetery in
1792.
Buildings marked in red.

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